Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

"Gracious God, and Father of us all, for the glory of summer days, for the beauty of the world and of human souls, we thank thee. Save us from marring aught which thou hast made, and with heart attuned to thy will may we live in blessedness and peace." Amen.

Volume V August 1954 Number 4

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER
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Volume V August 1954 Number 4

THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL

One is nearer to God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth. --Dorothy Gurney.

When we think of a garden we see a bit of ground, a plot of soil where flowers and vegetables grow. But a garden is more than this, for there is something there which changes soil to soul, and ground to God.

We think here of another garden, the garden of the human soul. Doubtless in this garden some replanting needs to be done. Why not some friendships lost through neglect? Or the sense of appreciation lost by the rough treatment life has recently passed out to us?

Here, too, weeds sometimes grow faster than flowers. Why not uproot some fast growing ones? For example, the weeds of carelessness, jealousy and selfishness grow with amazing rapidity and must ceaselessly be guarded against. But no garden is complete just by replanting and weeding. Something new must be started. Life needs the enrichment of new friendships. "I've made new friends this year" ought to be a fresh flower in everyone's garden. New ideas need to be planted. Then, too, there should be planted every season new dreams. To lose faith in the future is to lose one's life. If we will we can plant in our garden a new vision of what we can do with our talents, we can give freedom for the growth of the consciousness of what God can do through us, and realize anew our part in the building of a better world under His guidance.

—W. Ralph Ward, Jr.

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GARDENING IN WORDS

By Grenville Kleiser

A DELIGHTFUL HOBBY is that of gardening in words. It consists of choosing felicitous or significant words, in your general reading, and deliberately planting them in your mind to bring forth desirable mental fruit.

Read aloud, from a standard author, for at least ten minutes every day, concentrating upon words you wish to incorporate in your working vocabulary.

IN THAT CONNECTION KEEP A SMALL NOTEBOOK in which to record words that particularly impress you. Plant them in your mind by frequent repetition.

Since words are symbols of thought, this exercise in word-study not only builds a useful and resourceful vocabulary but also furnishes you with a fund of valuable ideas.

GARDENING IN WORDS, unlike that of outdoor gardening, is not subject to the caprice of weather but can be practiced anywhere.

In your quest for words you should equip yourself with a good dictionary and a book of synonyms.

AS YOU DAILY PURSUE THIS HOBBY of gathering words and impressing them deeply upon your mind, you will acquire facility and felicity in both speed and writing.

* * *

RIGHT WORDS ARE A POTENT POWER FOR GOOD. Frequent affirmation of constructive words yield gratifying results.

As Thomas Gaines says, in his inspiring book, "Higher Mental Action":

"THE SEED OF GREATNESS AND ADVANCEMENT is ever within us. As we prepare our mental soil and plant our thought seeds in it, they take root, fructify, and flourish exceedingly. Thoughts are living, actual forces that produce and re-produce after their own kind."

In Proverbs we read that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

SAID JOHN, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, "It is the Spirit that

quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

"Gardening in words," planting the words of wisdom, truth and righteousness in the mind, the ensuing harvest will inevitably be gratifying.

* * *

GIVE ME WORDS

Give me words of simple length,
Words of beauty, words of strength;
Words to scatter error's mist,
Words of rose and amethyst.

Give me words well fit for song,
Words to banish cruel wrong;
Words that smooth the rugged road,
Words to lighten someone's load.

Give me words for daily need,
Words a hungry heart to feed;
Words to help one bravely live,
Words to heal and thus forgive.

Give me words to save the world,
Words with liberty unfurled;
Words to brighten lonely days,
Words to proffer prayer and praise.

Give me words that flow with life,
Words to vanquish human strife;
Words that whisper tender love,
Words approved of God above.

--Grenville Kleiser

oooOooo

"Why stay we on earth, unless we grow?" *--Browning.*

oooOooo

GOD IN THE GARDEN

By Hilda Livingston Roosevelt

When I tend my plants in my small garden, feed and provide water for various wild birds every day, I feel quite strongly God's loving presence hovering around me.

In the early morning hours, a thrush is singing its very heart out on a branch near where I am working with spade and hoe and I feel more than ever fully conscious of God's overwhelming love and goodness, which gives me the lasting impression of being sanctified, loved and protected by the highest wisdom, just as the wild life, seeking asylum in my garden.

I wish that I could more adequately express exactly how it feels to live serenely under God's loving eyes, and to really see all the beauty around me. The flash of the beautiful Baltimore oriole, skipping like a golden flame among the bright green foliage of the trees; the mirrored image of the sleek, shining, red-winged blackbird in the little bathing pool, where the birds splash gratefully on very hot, humid days; the rare sight of a baby chipmunk quietly picking up its share from the seed-covered flatstone, along with nuthatch, chickadee, red-crested flicker, a warbler and several song sparrows -- such a peaceful scene!

But then, just as in the life of human beings, a most disturbing influence, in the shape of a huge raven, swoops down upon that little group and with his harsh voice and wide-open beak, disperses the friendly assembly and causes instant confusion and evident distress!

What do you know? The courageous blue jay, intent on feeding its young, goes promptly to their defense and chases the unwelcome stranger, driving him into full flight.

A few minutes later, the whole place is peaceful again and harmony returns to the garden! With the sinking sun, the cool evening breeze, springing up quite suddenly, carries with it the fluttering birds to their resting spots for the night. But, the rabbit nibbles hastily at the juicy clover leaves and, every now and then, it perks up its long, rosy tipped delicate ears, then nibbles on.

Have no fear, little rabbit, this is a sanctuary and verily the Good Lord walks in the garden, His Hands outstretched!

oooOooo

OUR EARTHLY EDENS

So many beauteous places God spreads
before our eyes,
Small, miniature Edens, hidden here for
our surprise;
His thoughts for us so lovingly and
generously planned,
That we may always reach and find His
beauty close at hand.

He hides away such lovely, peaceful little
nooks;
Mossy, fern and flower-boardered, crystal
babbling brooks;
Tall pines to murmur through the hours
their benedictine hymn,
With golden sunshine candles to light the
forest dim.

He places flowers where our eyes may
see their colors glow,
Deep crimson, yellow, blue and white,
embedded where soft mosses grow;
He places within each tiny cup a drop of
incense from above,
A pearl of dew from heaven's flowers,
His sign of tender love.

We do not need to travel far, have wealth
or fame or power
To find one of these beauty spots and
spend a tranquil hour;
These little Edens—replicas of that first
Eden planned,
He hides away for our delight, His beauty
always close at hand.

--Ae'lis Churchill Chaphe.

oooOooo

CHRISTIANITY, OTHER RELIGIONS AND NON-RELIGION

(From "RE-THINKING MISSIONS")

By William Ernest Hocking, D.D.

(Continued from June issue)

THE ATTITUDE TOWARD REFORM. *Growth in non-Christian religions: borrowings.* Whenever two vigorous religions are in contact, each will tend to borrow from the other—terms, usages, ideas, even gods and articles of faith. After centuries of such borrowing they show strong resemblances, like Taoism and Buddhism in China, while holding to some precious points of difference. Commonly the borrowing is without acknowledgment: each religion takes what it can use from the other, or from the common fund of popular usage, and gives it a turn and a derivation suited to its own history. So Christianity in its early days adopted Christmas tree, or Yule festival, or imagery from the mysteries, or philosophical tools from the stock of Greece and Rome. Sometimes the new acquisitions are merely set up outside or loaded into the general warehouse without logical regard to what is already there: Hinduism has frequently added to its inner variety in this way. Sometimes they take root and grow on the existing stock, because they belong there by natural stages of advance.

In the presence of Christianity, it is not surprising that the living religions of the East should grow in this way, especially Hinduism and Buddhism. They are not as a rule averse to acknowledging the debt, even while claiming that what they borrow is their own by right. In this way, little by little, much of Christianity is assimilated by these religions without calling it Christianity. Not merely modes of worship, preaching, Sunday schools, hymns, popular fables, but aspects of the conception of God, ethical notions, the honoring of Christ, may be taken over.

What should be the attitude of the Christian mission to this process? At best, it would appear to be a striking success of its own work: a transfer of the substance apart from the name. With what are we concerned except for the spread through the world of what Christianity means?

Nevertheless, there are misgivings. In part from a fear that the adoption will be imitative, unreal, or half-understood, leaving men satisfied with what resembles Christianity without its reality. In part from a very different fear,

namely, that the adoption will be real as far as it goes, the non-Christian religion thereby receive new vigor, the contrast between it and Christianity be lessened, the motives which have led its members to come over into the Christian fellowship correspondingly minimized. Those who feel this latter fear are evidently thinking in terms of competition. We have in mind a missionary who defines the God of Islam as a God of power, whereas the Christian God is a God of love. He is accordingly disturbed when he finds a Moslem teaching that the compassion of Allah is the same as the love of God: he inclines to cry plagiarism! and to warn all Moslems that the idea of God as loving Father is Christian and private property!

The situation is particularly pointed in Japan, where Buddhism with a keen, aggressive, well-equipped leadership shows the greatest readiness to appropriate Christian ideas and practices. If this means an advance in true religion among the Japanese people, how can the Christian have anything but welcome for the result? Yet the numerical advance of the Christian organizationis retarded by this very success: hence there enters an element of rivalry. To those primarily interested in the extension of church membership, this growth within Buddhism is likely to be read as a challenge calling for something like a counter-aggression. Concern for the institution here threatens to part company with concern for the souls of men.

It is time for the Christian movement to have overcome these unworthy fears springing from a sense of proprietorship. The unique thing in Christianity is not borrowable nor transferable without the transfer of Christianity itself. Whatever can be borrowed and successfully grown on another stock does in fact belong to the borrower. For a part of the life of any living religion is its groping for a better grasp of truth. The truth which rectifies the faults of any religious system is already foreshadowed in its own search. Hence all fences and private properties in truth are futile: the final truth, whatever it may be, is the New Testament of every existing faith.

We desire the triumph of that final truth: we need not prescribe the route. It appears probable that the advance toward that goal may be by way of the immediate strengthening of several of the present religions of Asia, Christian and

non-Christian together. The Christian who would be anxious in view of such a result displays too little confidence in the merits of his own faith. Whatever is unique in it, and necessary to the highest religious life of men can be trusted to show its value in due time and in its own way. Meantime, if through growing appreciation and borrowing, the vitality of genuine religion is anywhere increased he may well rejoice in that fact. He will look forward, not to the destruction of these religions, but to their continued co-existence with Christianity, each stimulating the other in growth toward the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth.

We bear in mind that while, through this process of growth, the several religions become more alike in one way, there is also the process of eliminating superstition and abuse which makes them more alike in another way. The modern spirit is a severe surgeon to much that once characterized these religions; silent and massive alterations of taste among the people are disposing of ancient crudities and indecencies; pious frauds find the sources of their incomes drying up. Just as human sacrifice has gone, and sacred prostitution has all but gone, so other practices become felt to be anachronistic or revolting to common consciousness and vanish from all the cults. The way is long, and a new patience is needed; but we can desire no variety of religious experience to perish until it has yielded up to the rest its own ingredient of truth. *(To be continued next issue)*

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Prayer For Business Executives:

Our Heavenly Father, be with me through the coming business day. Help me to be Christian in all I do, say, and think. May I be able to ask thy blessing on every plan I make.

May I never take advantage of my position to hurt or hinder the welfare of my fellow workers. In all my relations with my associates and employees may I set an example of Christian living and Christian loving. In Christ's name. Amen.

--Willard A. Pleuthner

oooOooo

THE AMBITIOUS VIOLET

By Kahlil Gibran

There was a beautiful and fragrant violet who lived placidly amongst her friends, and swayed happily amidst the other flowers in a solitary garden. One morning, as her crown was embellished with beads of dew, she lifted her head and looked about; she saw a tall and handsome rose standing proudly and reaching high into space, like a burning torch upon an emerald lamp.

The violet opened her blue lips and said, "What an unfortunate am I among these flowers, and how humble is the position I occupy in their presence! Nature has fashioned me to be short and poor. I live very close to the earth and I cannot raise my head toward the blue sky, or turn my face to the sun, as the roses do."

And the rose heard her neighbor's words; she laughed and commented, "How strange is your talk! You are fortunate, and yet you cannot understand your fortune. Nature has bestowed upon you fragrance and beauty which she did not grant to any other. . . . Cast aside your thoughts and be contented, and remember that he who humbles himself will be exalted, and he who exalts himself will be crushed."

The violet answered, "You are consoling me because you have that which I crave. . . . You seek to embitter me with the meaning that you are great. . . . How painful is the preaching of the fortunate to the heart of the miserable! And how severe is the strong when he stands as advisor among the weak!"

* * *

And Nature heard the conversation of the violet and the rose; she approached and said, "What has happened to you, my daughter violet? You have been humble and sweet in all your deeds and words. Has greed entered your heart and numbed your senses?" In a pleading voice, the violet answered her, saying, "Oh great and merciful mother, full of love and sympathy, I beg you, with all my heart and soul, to grant my request and allow me to be a rose for one day."

And Nature responded, "You know not what you are seeking, you are unaware of the concealed disaster behind your blind ambition. If you were a rose you would be sorry, and repentance would avail you but naught." The violet insisted,

"Change me into a tall rose, for I wish to lift my head high with pride; and regardless of my fate, it will be my own doing." Nature yielded, saying, "Oh ignorant and rebellious violet, I will grant your request. But if calamity befalls you, your complaint must be to yourself."

And Nature stretched forth her mysterious and magic fingers and touched the roots of the violet, who immediately turned into a tall rose, rising above all other flowers in the garden.

At eventide the sky became thick with black clouds, and the raging elements disturbed the silence of existence with thunder, and commenced to attack the garden, sending forth a great rain and strong winds. The tempest tore the branches and uprooted the plants and broke the stems of the tall flowers, sparing only the little ones who grew close to the friendly earth. That solitary garden suffered greatly from the belligerent skies, and when the storm calmed and the sky cleared, all the flowers were laid waste and none of them had escaped the wrath of Nature except the clan of small violets, hiding by the wall of the garden.

* * *

Having lifted her head and viewed the tragedy of the flowers and trees, one of the violet maidens smiled happily and called to her companions, saying, "See what the tempest has done to the haughty flowers!" Another violet said, "We are small, and live close to the earth, but we are safe from the wrath of the skies." And a third one added, "Because we are poor in height the tempest is unable to subdue us."

At that moment the queen of violets saw by her side the converted violet, hurled to earth by the storm and distorted upon the wet grass like a limp soldier in a battle field. The queen of the violets lifted her head and called to her family, saying, "Look, my daughters, and meditate upon that which Greed has done to the violet who became a proud rose for one hour. Let the memory of this scene be a reminder of your good fortune."

And the dying rose moved and gathered the remnants of her strength, and quietly said, "You are contented and meek dullards; I have never feared the tempest. Yesterday I, too, was satisfied and contented with Life, but contentment has acted as a barrier between my existence and the tempest of Life, confining me to a sickly and sluggish peace and tran-

quility of mind. I could have lived the same life you are living now by clinging with fear to the earth. . . . I could have waited for winter to shroud me with snow and deliver me to Death, who will surely claim all violets. . . . I am happy now because I have probed outside my little world into the mystery of the Universe . . . something which you have not yet done. I could have overlooked Greed, whose nature is higher than mine, but as I hearkened to the silence of the night, I heard the heavenly world talking to this earthly world, saying, 'Ambition beyond existence is the essential purpose of our being.' At that moment my spirit revolted and my heart longed for a position higher than my limited existence. I realized that the abyss cannot hear the song of the stars, and at that moment I commenced fighting against my smallness and craving for that which did not belong to me, until my rebelliousness turned into a great power, and my longing into a creating will. . . . Nature, who is the great object of our deeper dreams, granted my request and changed me into a rose with her magic fingers."

The rose became silent for a moment, and in a weakening voice, mingled with pride and achievement, she said, "I have lived one hour as a proud rose; I have existed for a time like a queen; I have looked at the Universe from behind the eyes of the rose; I have heard the whisper of the firmament through the ears of the rose and touched the folds of Light's garment with rose petals. Is there any here who can claim such honor?" Having thus spoken, she lowered her head, and with a choking voice she gasped, "I shall die now, for my soul has attained its goal. I have finally extended my knowledge to a world beyond the narrow cavern of my birth. This is the design of Life. . . . This is the secret of Existence." Then the rose quivered, slowly folded her petals, and breathed her last with a heavenly smile upon her lips . . . a smile of fulfillment of hope and purpose in Life . . . . a smile of victory . . . . a God's smile.

oooOooo

"It is not by change of circumstances, but by fitting our spirits to the circumstances in which God has placed us that we can be reconciled to life and duty." —*F. W. Robertson*

oooOooo

THE GOLDEN RULE IN MANY FAITHS

An example of a tenet common to all great faiths is the Golden Rule. Below are versions from six leading religions

CHRISTIANITY:

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them."

CONFUCIANISM:

金訓

"What you do not want done to yourself, do not do it to others."

Like millions of others, I have been preached to, advised and counseled by the clergy for years. I have been grateful. But now it is my turn. I am momentarily bold enough to offer some hard advice to religious leaders—in fact to leaders of all world faiths.

In briefest form, the advice is this: *It is time for them to de-emphasize their differences and to join in focusing world attention on the remarkable amount of agreement among the faiths (as opposed* to the godless dogma of world communism).

Putting it more explicitly: The *world's great religions are far more unified in their belief in God, brotherhood and decency than most of mankind realizes. Simply demonstrating and dramatizing that basic unity can strengthen the confidence and faith of hundreds of millions.*

Free men and believing men everywhere are groping for new sources of strength, confidence and hope. Meanwhile, behind the Iron Curtain, the depraved enemies of all religions are temporarily off balance. Stalin's heirs are haggling, intriguing and vacillating. The time is here for the world's great religions to stop concentrating on their differences, to spotlight the

JUDAISM:

מִצְוַת הַזָּהָב

"Whatever you do not wish your neighbor to do to you, do not do unto him."

clear and great principles on which all agree (and which the Kremlin abhors), and to launch a world "Crusade Of All Faiths."

If they would do so jointly and dramatically, they could reinvigorate the widespread religious belief that tyrants have desperately tried to stamp out; they could help bolster the sagging unity and determination of free men; and they could help speed the end of the nightmare known as the cold war.

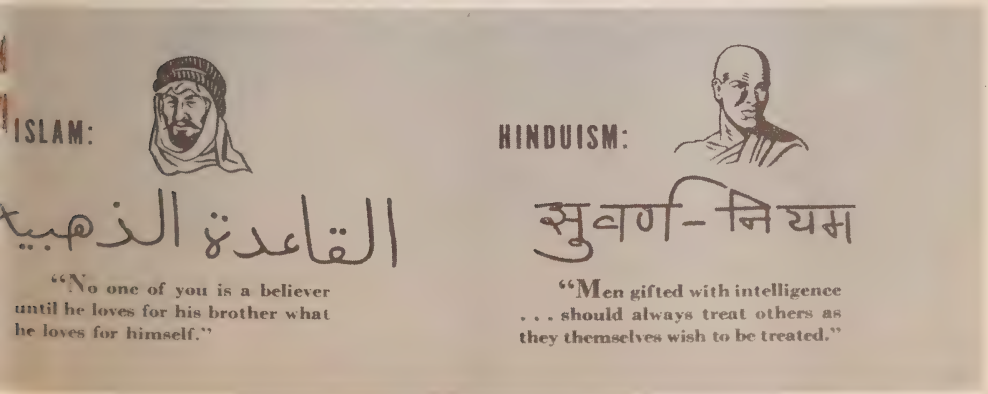
All that isn't easy—and I have been as skeptical as any about talk of a spiritual awakening that will win the cold war without anybody having to work at it. Yet it is likely that such a Crusade Of All Faiths, if dramatized around the world by radio, leaflets and other means, could have a striking impact in free areas and enslaved areas alike.

I CAN hear "practical" objections already, "Do you expect to accomplish miracles by words alone?" "Are you trying to persuade our friends behind the Iron Curtain to revolt prematurely and thus get themselves killed off?"

The answer is "no" in both cases. Religious leaders are simply urged to join forces belatedly, not in achieving miracles but in helping to forward the cause of decency and freedom. History is filled with cases where people, united and inspired by the right words, have profoundly altered the trend of history—and often without bloodshed. It can happen again.

"Faith," it has been said, "is a contagious thing." nothing can beget faith and confidence as effectively as seeing it in millions of one's fellows around the world.

As practical a man as Owen D. Young gave support to the idea only a few months ago. He said: "All religious organi-


ISLAM:
القاعدة الذهبية
"No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."
HINDUISM:
सुवर्ण-नियम
"Men gifted with intelligence . . . should always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated."

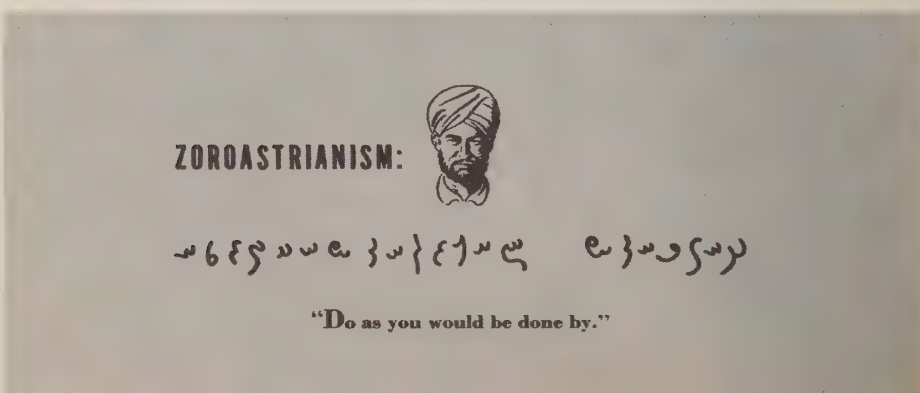
zations everywhere—I don't care whether they are Mohammedans or Buddhists or whatever—who believe in an omnipotent, all-wise Creator should be working together.... We should stop arguing about minor differences over what the next world is. What we need is unification on faith in a great Creator, on sympathy with the salvation of men in this world."

Actually, the task isn't as difficult as it first sounds:

The principles are clear. Ever since the cold war began, statesmen, thinkers and propagandists of many nations have groped for some sort of new and ringing "Creed of the Free World." Yet the essence of the creed had been right under their noses. I realized this only the other day while thumbing through voluminous material on the religions of the world. The basic creed consists of clear and simple beliefs that are shared by all of the world's great religions: The dignity of the individual; the brotherhood of man; the Golden Rule; the fatherhood of God.

As strikingly illustrated on these pages by the case of the Golden Rule, those beliefs are common to all great faiths—to Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, the Baha'i Faith, and others. And they are basic. The Golden Rule, for example, is the very foundation of the Bill of Rights, the Four Freedoms, and other principles we cherish.

The opportunity is here. In this nation and abroad, many men of many faiths have sensed the need for some form of new moral drive. They have started noonday "prayers for peace." "freedom services," "moral revival" drives. Some of these have made commendable headway. But they have been diffuse



and diverse. Most of them have concerned single nations or single denominations. None has been big enough to dramatize the essential unity of all religions in the face of communist tyrants who proclaim "there is no God or moral law" and who condemn all religion because it "weakens revolutionary hatred and intolerance."

There is no denying that there are many differences, large and small, among the world's religions. But those pale beside the differences that separate communism's anti-religious materialism from each of the world's great faiths and from all people who believe in God.

There need be no misguided effort to fit all faiths into a common mold. All that is required is for religious leaders to recognize the remarkable degree of agreement among all faiths, to join in dramatizing it and to spotlight communism's fear and hatred of all religions.

The opposition is vulnerable. Opponent No. 1, cynicism, is weak. Men and women, groping for renewed confidence, are buying far more Bibles, more Korans, more inspirational books than ever before.

Opponent No. 2, godless tyranny, is vulnerable. The Soviet tyrants themselves reluctantly admitted in 1942 that, after years of ruthless anti-religious repression, a majority of Russians still believe in God (as revealed in THIS WEEK, November 25, 1951). Intelligence reports show even higher proportions of the satellite peoples quietly clinging to religion.

There has never been much ground for all the defeatist talk about the Free World having no clear principles while the Soviet communists have a "clear, dynamic creed." Actually, they have nothing of the sort. Communist dogma is a mass of turgid dialectics that some frustrated souls have swallowed—and then crammed down the throats of others.

In truth, the communist "creed" consists of a lot of tortured dogma about "the material world" being "primary"; about vesting "all tools of production in the state"; about having a political party direct the state with "unlimited power based on force and not on law," and about "ruthless elimination" of dissenters—all for the benefit of the "masses."

Some fanatics have grasped such doctrine and promoted it

with incredible trickery, intrigue and ruthlessness. But it has no magic for fully rational beings. That doubtless explains why no nation anywhere has ever gone communist in a free election.

Certainly there is no cause to be quiveringly awe-struck at the communist "creed" when it is contrasted with the simple, clear beliefs that have stood the test of time in each and all of the great religions.

The channels are open. Most of the world's great international radios—BBC, the Voice of America, Radio Ankara, RIAS, the French RDF, Radio Free Europe, and all the others—would gladly co-operate in spreading the message. So would the private organizations that have experimented with balloon-borne leaflets to the Iron Curtain area. So would the world's news services.

When I was in charge of this nation's "Campaign of Truth" for two recent years, I found the religious leaders co-operative but often sensitive for fear of being "used" by propagandists. But in this proposal, the initiative is put squarely up to them. Here is their chance to take a lead and, appropriately, to "use" the great communications systems. It would amount to historic "propagation of the faith" broadened to embrace the joint faith of many religions.

The program could be simple. If religious leaders could just agree to concentrate on their points of agreement, the program would not be difficult. Representatives of a dozen faiths could meet and map out a joint program in a week's time.

They could, for example, agree to start off with a world-wide series of prayers for the enslaved. Each faith could offer, in its own way, prayers for the oppressed and persecuted in the slave states. They could avail themselves of scores of transmitters to broadcast those prayers and translations of them across the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.

For the following month, broadcasts and balloon-borne leaflets could feature the golden rule in many faiths and many tongues—with a message stressing that the religious faithful behind the curtains are not forgotten by hundreds of millions around the world. Next could come the principle of the brotherhood of man in many faiths—again with a joint

message.

Then could come statements of many creeds on the Fatherhood of God and Divine Justice. After that, simultaneous world prayers for the enslaved could be repeated.

The whole could add up to a ringing, world-wide manifestation, not of the differences between religions, but of the great beliefs shared by all and dreaded by the tyrants. It could sweep around the world—across every barrier—as a reminder to all men of their universal brotherhood.

To effect such a joint crusade, some individual or group would have to exert extraordinary leadership. The heads of the several faiths would, of course, have to push traditional differences into the background.

But, God willing, it could be done. And ultimately it could mean the difference between peace and war.

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COUNT YOUR--

Count your garden by the flowers,
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days by golden hours,
Don't remember clouds at all.

Count your nights by stars, not shadows,
Count your life by smiles, not tears;
And with joy, on ev'ry birthday,
Count your age by friends, not years.

--Author unknown.

oooOooo

"Flowers whisper the message that words fail to express."

oooOooo

SACRED TREES

The Old Testament story of man begins with a garden and two sacred trees; the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was the fruit of the latter that Eve ate and gave to Adam to eat. As a result, we are told they were driven from the garden to "Eat the herb of the field."

It is said that Abraham frequented the Oaks of Mamre.

The burning bush was the place where Moses sensed the presence of God.

The children of Israel were once judged by a prophetess Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, "and she dwelt under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment."

The struggle of the Hebrews against the old Canaanitish religion was against their groves, high hills which concealed their venerated places.

The cedars of Lebanon became a part of sacred history when they were used in building the temple at Jerusalem.

The olive tree has become distinctly associated with the Holy Land and Christ vented his indignation against the fig tree as it bore no fruit to satisfy His hunger, while Zaccheus climed a sycamore tree to see Christ as he passed by.

Religion abounds with an amazing variety of practices in the treatment of sacred trees. In the earliest savage cults, a belief in tree spirits is found. Mythologies are replete with tree cults, and the sculpture and the decorative arts of ancient cultures carry the theme of the life-giving fertility of the tree. For the tree symbolizes both living vitality and the fellowship with nature for the worshipper. Buddha's conversion under the Bohdi tree provided a link thereafter between the Buddha's followers and the living Bo tree. Throughout Europe, once covered with great forests, tribes had their sacred trees. When a daring Irish monk brought Christianity to the Saxons in the eighth century, his first act was to cut down their sacred tree. The Oak tree was especially sacred among the Greeks, the Celts and Germans.

Sacred trees may be the abode of deities or may be the divine beings themselves. Thus, they are treated as human

beings, appealed to by voice and offering, threatened if not fruitful, married to other trees, treated with great respect as taboo. The social value of tree cults was to increase respect for trees, insure their preservation. Among some tribes no tree was cut down without offering a prayer to the tree spirit. The deer parks in Japan around her shrines represent a deep veneration for trees, which has been socially beneficial to the nation in preservation of forests and of the beauty of their valleys.

* * *

Nearly two milleniums ago, crucifixion crosses came to be called "*trees*" and a beautiful poem has been written on the shame felt by trees to be used for the purpose.

But the Revelation of St. John the Divine promises "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Trees must have been looked upon by New England settlers as a sacred gift as they were essential in the building of the log cabins for protection from the rigors of the severe climate. The wood formed the rough furniture, also fuel for cooking food and heating. It was pretty much the basic material in the development of Northeast America. As settlers poured in, however, trees stood in the way of agricultural progress and clearings were made at the expense of wanton destruction of vast areas now shown in fields, pastures and meadows. Some of these vacant areas are now being reforested to replenish the diminishing supply of timber and to stave off erosion of the soil. Thus, we are beginning to attach some sacredness to the value of the tree.

"The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them—Ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication."

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A CHALLENGE

With gratitude to the writer, Mr. Edward W. Barrett, and to the publisher of THIS WEEK magazine, we print in full "Needed: A Crusade Of All Faiths" which appeared on January 10, 1954.

Mr. Barrett rightly states that no organization with similar purpose has arisen which has been big enough to "dramatize" the essential unity of all religions. One such undertaking, based on moral values, has used full page display advertisements in newspapers, but it takes far more than that to launch a spiritual program of the kind in mind. We know of five other interfaith projects whose main objective is prayer for peace and/or bolstering United Nations. There are several corporations aiming to absorb all governments. None, however, has sufficiently captured public imagination to snowball into a major movement. Fellowship in Prayer was launched through an article in The New York Times on December 12, 1949. Response thereto could have approached a "dramatization" of the program. The results, however, were nominal—but came from people whose demands for continuance of the work could not be denied.

One thing is certain: a spiritual regeneration must come to pass! How it is to be achieved is a question. But more than thirty years of deeply involved religious activity, at home and abroad, has been a convincing teacher. It has taught us that the individual must be changed ere there is any lasting improvement in human society; that the family, the church, the nation, is no better than the individual. Professed followers of any faith must recognize the fundamental truths, basic in his or her religion, and live them.

How to maintain the purely spiritual character of our purpose, under wide publicity, is an unanswered question. But there must come a *change of heart* in many people—"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" and "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

We face a menacing world-wide situation and Mr. Barrett challenges religious leadership. Who dares to accept this challenge?

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Hilda Livingston Roosevelt von Koschembahr

" It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life."

So reads the last line of St. Francis of Assisi's prayer as it appeared in the beautiful brochure in memory of Mrs. Hilda Livingston Roosevelt von Koschembahr who suffered a stroke while working among her plants in her beloved garden and died May 26, 1954.

While she was the mother of seven sons and six daughters, and grandmother of eleven children, she found time to be deeply interested in poetry, literature and music, with a profound concern for down-trodden peoples in all lands. Daily, and in profusion, her prayers ascended to God for peace among all mankind.

She became interested in Fellowship in Prayer from its very inception and readers have remarked on the quality of her verse as we have published her writings on several occasions. This issue depicts a scene in her garden where she was working when stricken. Her keen perception of the value of united prayer is shown in her letters which were always an inspiration to our work and came at times when they seemed like a voice from the Great Beyond. A sentence from a letter written by her on November 4, 1950 shows her appreciation of the very fundamental issue involved in the peace question:

" We can never have any real and lasting genuine peace unless the Spirit of God penetrates all human hearts and influences the thoughts and acts of all peoples upon the earth. But we must pray for the Spirit to descend, cleanse and widen our hearts with love and compassion."

The funeral service was conducted by The Rev. Roelif H. Brooks, D.D. at St. Thomas Church, New York City, May 29, 1954.

A poem which she wrote upon the loss of a very dear friend seems a fitting benediction--

" If I could tell you, how I miss your smile,
The reassuring pressure of your hand
Walking through fields and woods far stretching many a mile
And gazing from the heights on verdant pasture land
If I could tell you, how your laugh I miss
Ringing out gaily, of your crinkled eyes

(over)

In merriment, your sudden rosebud kiss
How all about you, was a new surprise!
I found enraptured, every single day
But now I flounder blindly in the dark
Since by your going, you took light away
I search and search in vain for blessed spark
That once set my fond heart with golden flames a-glowing
But now my tears like April rains, are flowing!

H. v K."

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APPRECIATION

Aside from our Contributing Editors, to whom we are eternally grateful for their help, we likewise extend gratitude, unless otherwise expressed, for the following articles appearing in this number:

THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL - (From THE SPIRITUAL DIARY edited *By Bennie Caroline Hall*)

GOD IN THE GARDEN - *By Hilda Livingston Roosevelt.*

OUR EARTHLY EDENS - *By Ae'lis Churchill Chaphe.*

PRAYER FOR BUSINESS EXECUTIVES - *By Willard A. Pleuthner*, author of MORE POWER FOR YOUR CHURCH, and BUILDING UP YOUR CONGREGATION

THE AMBITIOUS VIOLET - *By Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)* From - SECRETS OF THE HEART, Philosophical Library, New York.

COUNT YOUR-- - *(Observed by Mrs. Frank W. Lovejoy)*

FATHER OF LIGHTS - *By A. E. Johnson.*

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NOTICES

MAY DAY—PRAY DAY. A deluge of written endorsements of "May Day—Pray Day" reprinted in our June number was received by the Junior Chamber of Commerce from Chapters throughout the world. These were bound in a leather volume and sent by air to the Communist Presidium in Moscow. The following information was received regarding receipt of the book:

> "Radio Free Europe has received a post office acknowledgment card indicating that 'May Day—Pray Day' packet was received in Moscow at 1640 (4:40 P.M.) on May 17 and was signed for by representatives of the 'Daily Dispatch Service of the Kremlin.' Signature was illegible."

CHRISTMAS CARDS. With this issue is a separate sheet relative to cards available for the coming Holiday Season, giving full details and including an order blank.

PROF. A. E. JOHNSON. Syracuse University has made our vice president, Prof A.E. Johnson, Poet-in-Residence for 1954 — 1955 with release from formal duties—the first to be so honored. Congratulations to Prof. Johnson!

SUBSCRIBERS. At the end of the subscription period, subscribers receive an expiration notice. This, of course, is aside from larger amounts contributed annually toward the program. Early attention to these notices is earnestly sought in order to avoid unnecessary expense, and to maintain the continuity of issues. The subscription rate is $2.00 per year for the bimonthly publication.

THE PURPOSE of the organization is:

> "To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

GIFTS and *BEQUESTS* will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged by Fellowship in Prayer, Inc.

ADDRESS: 22 East 29th Street, New York 16, N. Y.
TELEPHONE: MUrray Hill 5-2758.

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FATHER OF LIGHTS

(Specially written for the 100th Commencement of Syracuse University)

Father of Lights, whose golden shafts have shed
Light on our way throughout the building years,
Whereby our Founders' feet were safely led
Through all impediments and fears;
Now from the prospect of their Hill we raise
Our hymn of thankfulness and praise.

Praise for those firm and dedicated hearts,
First planters of the holy seed unpriced,
Whose wondrous bloom perenially imparts
The lore of the immortal Christ;
Praise for the wards of that encircling Light
Wherein today our path is bright.

Here for the hundredth time we proudly send
Down from the citadel a further corps,
Into the vale with kindred souls to blend
In Life's unending Holy War,
Waged on the false, the twisted and the crude,
Torchlit of truth, captained of God.

Years that are gone, and all the years to come,
Now in the pulsing present day we bind;
Help us to fashion in our hearts Thy home
And in Thy peace our own to find;
Transform our weakness and confirm our soul,
Ride with us, Master, to the Goal.

—*A. E. Johnson*

TUNE: *Finlandia*